

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 PRS-01

NSC-05 CCO-00 CPR-01 SSO-00 MMO-01 PA-01 /045 W

----- 013423

O P 270914Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5906

INFO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (ROCKEFELLER, NELSON)

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

REF: LONDON 14874

1.. FOLLOWING IS SECOND DRAFT OF PROPOSED REMARKS FOR VICE-PRESIDENT AT OPENING OF SACRED CIRCLES: 2,000 YEARS OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN ART. AT LONDON'S HAYWARD GALLERY, OCTOBER 5:

2. START TEXT: IT TOOK TWO THOUSAND YEARS TO MAKE THIS EXHIBIT--AND IT TOOK FIVE YEARS TO PUT IT TOGETHER. SO I DON'T MIND AT ALL FLYING A FEW THOUSAND MILES TO JOIN YOU ON THIS WONDERFUL OCCASION.

MY INTEREST IN WHAT IS COMMONLY AND WRONGLY DESCRIBED AS PRIMITIVE ART GOES BACK A GOOD MANY YEARS, BUT I NEVER CEASE TO BE THRILLED BY IT. . . I NEVER CEASE TO MAKE NEW DISCOVERIES. AND, I MUST ADMIT, I NEVER CEASE TO BE ASTONISHED BY ITS BEAUTY AND CREATIVITY.

THIS EXHIBIT LIVES UP TO ITS BILLING AS THE MOST DEFINITIVE COLLECTION OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN ART EVER SHOWN. AND IT IS MORE--IT IS A BREATH-TAKING COLLECTION --AND IF I SAY ANY MORE ABOUT IT--I'LL RUN OUT OF ADJECTIVES.

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I CONFESS TO A MILD CASE OF JEALOUSY--THAT THIS

COLLECTION IS BEING SHOWN HERE FIRST, INSTEAD OF ON THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT WHERE THE CRAFTSMEN AND ARTISTS OF YESTERDAY' AND TODAY LIVED AND WORKED.

BUT FACTS ARE FACTS: IT WAS THE BRITISH AND THE CONTINENTAL EUROPEANS WHO WERE THE FIRST TO APPRECIATE DISTINCTIVENESS AND BEAUTY IN THE ETHNIC ART OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN.

IN FACT, MANY OF THE FINEST WORKS ON DISPLAY HERE COME FROM COLLECTIONS IN BRITAIN AND ON THE CONTINENT. IT IS ONLY IN RECENT YEARS THAT THE SETTLER AMERICANS DISCOVERED WHAT THE FIRST AMERICANS HAD BEEN DOING ALL THOSE CENTURIES.

BUT THIS EXHIBIT RAISES THE LEVEL OF OUR RECOGNITION TO WHERE IT BELONGS--IN EXHIBITIONS SUCH AS THIS. THESE ARE TREASURES, TO BE SEEN AND APPRECIATED, INDEED, TO BE PONDERED AS WE TRACE THE DIVERSITY OF OUR CULTURES FOR OUR ROOTS.

I AM CONVINCED THIS EXHIBITION WILL BE A GREAT SUCCESS--AND THE REASON IS NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS AWESOME IN SIZE AND AMBITION, BEAUTIFUL AND MYSTIC IN CONTENT. RATHER, IT IS BECAUSE THE INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA ARE A PEOPLE OF ABSORBING INTEREST THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO MYTH AND MISUNDERSTANDING AS PERHAPS HAVE NO OTHER PEOPLE. WRONGLY, THEY HAVE, AT VARIOUS TIMES, BEEN ROMANTICIZED AND RIDICULED; TRAGICALLY, THEY HAVE BEEN PERSECUTED AND ISOLATED, PATRONIZED AND OVERPROTECTED.

THE REALITY IS THAT AMERICA'S INDIAN COMMUNITY OF TODAY--ALMOST ONE MILLION AND GROWING--IS AS COMPLEX AS IS THE REST OF OUR SOCIETY, AS DIVERSE IN THEIR OWN VIEWS OF WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG FOR THEM AS ARE OUR OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS. NO SINGLE PERSON, NO SINGLE ORGANIZATION, CAN SPEAK FOR THEM--BUT IF THERE IS A SINGLE POINT ON WHICH ALL AGREE, IT IS THAT THEY WANT TO SHARE IN AMERICA'S PROSPERITY; THEY WANT TO RETAIN THEIR DISTINCTIVE CULTURAL LIFE AND PASS IT ON TO THEIR NEXT GENERATION.

AS WE ALL WELL KNOW, THIS IS ONE OF MANKIND'S MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES; IT IS NOT A DILEMMA MADE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AMERICA. IT IS ONE FACED IN EVERY NATION WHERE LIVE PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AND CULTURES.

AND NONE OF US CAN FIND REFUGE IN THE CLASHES AND THE AGONIES OF OTHERS: WE CAN ONLY WORK TOWARD PRACTICAL ACCOMMODATION. FOR TWO HUNDRED YEARS, OUR GOVERNMENT MADE WIDE SWINGS IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO FIND THE PROPER COURSE. IT MOVED FROM AN EARLY POLICY OF ASSIMILATION INTO WHITE SOCIETY TO ONE OF PROTECTIVE PATERNALISM

IN THE FORM OF ISOLATION ON TRIBAL RESERVATIONS.

IRONICALLY, AN INDIAN CHIEF OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS
AGO, CHIEF JOSEPH OF THE NEZ PERCES TRIBE, EXPRESSED

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THEN IN MAGNIFICENT WORDS THE YEARNING OF THE INDIAN--
PERHAPS OF EVERY PERSON TRAPPED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.

-LET ME BE A FREE MAN," WROTE CHIEF JOSEPH, FREE
TO TRAVEL, FREE TO STOO, FREE TO WORK, FREE TO TRADE
WHERE I CHOOSE, FREE TO CHOOSE MY OWN TEACHERS, FREE TO
FOLLOW THE RELIGION OF MY FATHERS, FREE TO THINK AND TALK
AND ACT FOR MYSELF--AND I WILL OBEY EVERY LAW OR SUBMIT
TO EVERY PENALTY...

IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THIS IS OUR APPROACH TODAY.
OUR PRESENT POLICY PROVIDES FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR
AMERICA'S INDIANS; THEY NOW HAVE THE LEGISLATIVE
AUTHORITY TO DECIDE WHAT IS BEST FOR THEM AND THE
RIGHT TO ADMINISTER THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

IT REPRESENTS THE HIGHEST VALUES OF AMERICAN
SOCIETY. WE CANNOT, SHOULD NOT, FORCE ASSIMILATION;
WE CANNOT, SHOULD NOT, ENCOURAGE SEPARATION.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE IS THE ESSENCE OF OUR NATIONAL
LIFE, AND WE HAVE EXTENDED IT, FINALLY, TO THE FIRST

AMERICANS.

ONE OF OUR FAMED AUTHORS, ZANE GREV, WROTE A
GENERATION AGO OF THE INDIAN--THAT -MELANCHOLY FIGURE,"
AS HE DESCRIBED HIM, "DIMINISHING, FADING, VANISHING.-

I'M GLAD TO SAY THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE;
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AMERICA'S INDIANS ARE NOT ONLY VISIBLE ON THE AMERICAN
MAP TODAY--BUT THEY ARE ASSUMING THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN
THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS AND CULTURE OF OUR LAND.
THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE MOUNTING STEADILY AS THEIR
TALENTS ARE NURTURED BY THEIR OWN SELF-DEVELOPMENT.

IT IS NOT AN EASY ROAD, THIS ATTEMPT TO SUSTAIN
DIFFERING CULTURES IN A SOCIETY THAT OFTEN DEMANDS
CONFORMITY AS THE PASSPORT FOR SUCCESS. BUT WE THINK
WE ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH, FINALLY, AFTER SEVERAL
CENTURIES OF EXPERIMENT AND FAILURE.

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I MUST CONFESS THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR
MY VISIT--NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS THAT THIS IS THE
YEAR, AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD MORE THAN YOU ANTICIPATED,
OF THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL.

AND IF THERE WAS A TIME TO VISIT BRITAIN, IT IS
NOW--NOT TO RECOLLECT OUR SEPARATION, BUT RATHER TO
RECALL OUR DEEP TIES.

IN OUR DEDICATION TO COMMON INSTITUTIONS, IN OUR
DEDICATION TO THE FREEDOM AND DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL,
IN OUR PURSUIT OF PEACE--WE ARE ONE.

THESE ARE MY LAST MONTHS IN PUBLIC OFFICE--AND IF
YOU WILL ALLOW ME A SHORT INDULGENCE--I WILL SPEAK FROM
THE HEART. THERE ARE GREAT REASONS WHY THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN BRITAIN AND AMERICA HAS ENDURED THESE MANY
DECADES. THEY GO BEYOND OUR COMMON DEFENSE AGAINST A
COMMON THREAT; BEYOND OUR ECONOMIC INTERESTS, EVEN
BEYOND THE SENTIMENTAL TIES OF ANCESTRY AND EVEN
LANGUAGE.

WE BOTH DRAW FROM A COMMON BELIEF IN THE DIGNITY
AND INDIVIDUALITY OF MAN. . . THAT HE HAS CERTAIN
INALIENABLE RIGHTS TO JUSTICE AND A FAIR DEAL. . . THAT
HE SHOULD BE REWARDED FOR EFFORTS THAT GO BEYOND THE
ORDINARY, THAT HE SHOULD NOT BE PENALIZED FOR BEING
EXCEPTIONAL, THAT WE, ALL OF US, ARE SUBJECT TO THE LAWS
OF THE LAND.

THIS IS NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT LINK. BRITAIN HAS
BEEN GENEROUS IN THE ATTENTION IT HAS GIVEN US DURING
OUR BICENTENNIAL. IT HAS DRAWN US CLOSER--THE OLD AND
THE NEW WORLDS--AND I HOPE THAT THIS RENEWAL EXTENDS FOR
FOR MANY GENERATIONS.

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I'M REALLY DELIGHTED TO BE WITH YOU. I HAVE SEEN
A MOST EXCITING EXHIBITION OF ART THAT I RESPECT AND
HAVE COME TO LOVE OVER THE YEARS. IT IS A TRIBUTE TO
EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART IN THE MONUMENTAL EFFORT TO SEE
IT THROUGH EVERY STAGE.

AND I AM BACK IN LONDON, A CITY THAT HAS MEANT SO
MUCH TO ME OVER THE YEARS. . .AND TO BE WITH FRIENDS AND
COLLEAGUES OF MANY YEARS. IT IS GOOD TO BE WITH YOU--
AND YOU HAVE MY VERY BEST WISHES FOR A SUCCESSFUL,
EXCITING AND STIMULATING EXHIBITION. END TEXT.
ARMSTRONG

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